Accountability Framework For Adult Learning Centres

2001 - 2002

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY
OCT 16 2001
MANITOBA

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth
Community Learning and Youth Programs Branch

Accountability Framework For Adult Learning Centres

Introduction

During the fall of 2000, consultation sessions were held throughout the province to provide feedback on the developing Adult Learning Centre policy. In these sessions it was generally acknowledged that Adult Learning Centres (ALC's) developed quickly and without the benefit of a framework that supported accountability. Three primary areas of accountability were identified:

1. ALC's are accountable towards the learner.

   A system of needs assessment and regular consultations with the adult clients of an ALC are necessary to ensure that the instruction and supports being offered are meeting the learning needs of adults. ALC's must provide programs that are relevant and high in quality.

2. ALC's are accountable to government as their primary funding provider.

   Statistical measurement terms such as attendance levels, completion rates/success rates, credits received, etc. are generally well understood and expected to be applied within any program delivery framework. These measures provide baseline information to aid government in making decisions with regard to funding, but for the purposes of Adult Learning Centres they form an incomplete picture.

3. ALC's are accountable to the community.

   Adult learning centres exist in specific community contexts, and measurement of 'success' revolves around the needs of the particular community and the partnerships that are created within the ALC.

New accountability measures, including a *Good Practice Guide for Adult Learning Centres,* have been developed to provide ALC's with a tool for reporting their strengths and accomplishments, as well as for developing goals and objectives for continuous improvement.

Principles of Good Practice for Adult Learning Centres

The following Principles of Good Practice arise from consultation with practitioners in the local ALC context, as well as current research on adult learning theory and practice. The existing research tends to examine the experience of adults in post-secondary education, workplace education, and literacy training, but there are essential adult learning principles that are common to all these areas, and which can be applied to ALC's.

1. An ALC is **an adult centred** program in which adult education principles and practices are applied to curriculum and program delivery, NOT just a high school program whose students happen to be adults. The ALC has a clearly articulated mission that inspires and directs practice. This mission is informed by an understanding of adult learning and development.

2. ALC operations demonstrate the program's **respect for the central role of the adult learner in all aspects of the educational experience**. Consequently ALCs build on the acquired knowledge of adult learners, recognize that adults learn from each other, and recognize that adults have a variety of responsibilities which compete for their time and attention.

3. ALCs provide a **safe environment for learning** that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful of difference and personal preference.

4. Decisions regarding ALC programs and services are made in **regular and meaningful consultation with all stakeholders.** These stakeholders include funding bodies, teaching and administrative staff, relevant local community, labour, and business stakeholders, and most importantly, the adult learners themselves.

5. The ALC deliberately acts in creative ways to modify practices in order to **meet learner needs**. Program staff collaborate *with* adult learners to ensure an educational experience and curriculum which responds to adult learner's goals and interests. The following questions are consistently reviewed in the program planning process:

   - What are the needs of the adult learner?
   - How can we meet adult learners' needs?
   - How can our academic and support services be more convenient for adult learners?
   - How can we assist adult learners to meet their educational, career and personal goals?
   - How do we evaluate the success of our programs?.

6. **Flexibility and expectation of change** characterize every aspect of the culture at the ALC, such as: instructor roles, administrative structure, instructional modes, delivery times and places, student services, and day-to-day interaction with adult learners.

7. ALC's make continuous and deliberate efforts to **ensure programs are both accessible and high in quality** through an ongoing process of program evaluation, goal setting and development.

8. **ALC's are inclusive** of adults with diverse backgrounds, abilities and material resources, and are designed to determine the best educational match for the adult learner.

9. The ALC plans for **adequate and appropriate resources** to support instruction. Resources may include, but are not limited to: academic counseling, tutoring, print materials, media resources, classroom supplies and equipment, technology, administrative resources, and professional

development for faculty. Special care is taken to ensure those facilities and materials used are appropriate for adult use.

10. Since no one ALC can expect to be all things to all students, sharing of information amongst ALC programs and appropriate **referral** of students should be supported and encouraged.

11. By engaging in **partnerships** with school divisions, literacy providers, workplace training programs, post-secondary institutions, businesses, government, and/or community organizations, ALC's facilitate the process of ensuring adult learners a more barrier-free journey towards their long term learning goals.

12. ALC's engage adult learners in an ongoing dialogue designed to assist them with making **informed educational planning decisions**. This dialogue includes, when appropriate, pre-enrollment advising, assessment of prior learning and ongoing educational planning.

13. ALC's are responsible for hiring **teaching and support staff with relevant training and experience**, and for providing staff with ongoing evaluation and professional development support. ALC teaching staff:

    a) must be certified to teach in Manitoba public schools or qualified to teach in Manitoba post-secondary institutions;

    b) should have relevant subject area expertise;

    c) should have additional specialized training and/or experience in the field of Adult Education. (see appendix for available training opportunities)

Accountability Process for Adult Learning Centres

The 2001-2002 academic year will be a transitional period for Adult Learning Centres. This will be the first year in which ALC funding is calculated primarily on a program basis rather than the per-capita model traditionally used by school programs. Because the whole system is in transition, clearly the accountability processes will need to be phased in gradually. Manitoba Education Training and Youth recognizes that your program may not have kept specific records in some of the areas for which you will now be reporting program information. It is understood that for the first year your statistical figures will be approximate. For future years you will be able to use the current reporting questionnaires as a guide for deciding which information you need to track for accountability purposes.

During the consultation process, there was a strong consensus that there needed to be a balance between qualitative and quantitative accountability measures. For the first part of this transition year the reporting process may feel like it is still weighted heavily on the quantitative side. There are two main reasons for this:

- Since we are moving from a system that tracked quantitative data almost exclusively, this is the easiest information to begin with in the process of building up a portrait of each program.
- Good qualitative data takes time to assemble and report adequately. Many ALC's will need time to put these processes in place.

Qualitative Assessment

- A qualitative assessment tool known as the *Good Practice Guide for Adult Learning Centres* is being developed to enable ALC's to report on program strengths and objectives with input from directors, instructors, learners, and other stakeholders. Centres receiving ALC program funding will be expected to complete the *Good Practice Guide for Adult Learning Centres* on an annual basis.

- Based on the good practice information gathered, programs will complete an annual "Development plan," which is a program self-evaluation tool directed toward continuous program improvement.

- Programs will have the opportunity to meet directly with staff from Community Learning and Youth Programs to review accomplishments, strategies and objectives.

Reporting Schedule

By March 30, 2001
- Initial Funding Application and Draft Budget. Community Learning and Youth Programs Branch aims to communicate funding decisions to Centres by April 30th

By December 15, 2001:
- Program overview of actual offerings, staffing, and enrolment and attrition for the period August 31, 2001 to December 15, 2001
- Interim Financial Statement for the period of August 31, 2001 to December 15, 2001
- Revised budget for the 2001-2002 school year (if necessary)

By March 15, 2002
- Program analysis results from the *Good Practice Guide for Adult Learning Centres* (including an Interim Statistical Report, a Development Plan and a Proposed Budget for the next year or years)

By August 31, 2002:
- a year-end financial statement of actual revenue and expenses for the period from August 31, 2001 to August 31, 2002
- a final Statistical Return

By December 15, 2002:
- Program overview of actual offerings, staffing, and enrolment and attrition for the period August 31, 2002 to December 15, 2002
- Interim Financial Statement for the period of August 31, 2002 to December 15, 2002
- Revised budget for the 2002-2003 school year (if necessary)

Will funding requirements change?

As changes are made to adult education policy, and as options for the provision of adult upgrading expand, the funding application process will need to be revised. By 2002-2003 the completion of the *Good Practice Guide* will replace the funding application for those Adult Learning Centres that have been previously approved for funding.

A more detailed funding application will only be required if an Adult Learning Centre:

- is applying for funding for the first time
- is submitting a multi-year proposal for the first time
- is making significant changes to an approved multi-year proposal

Note that while funding in the initial year will be determined on the basis of the initial funding application, recommendation for funding in future years will be based on the results of all the above qualitative and quantitative evaluations.

Appendix

Specialized training that is currently available in Manitoba includes, but is not limited to:

- Professional Development opportunities offered through the Adult Secondary Education Council (ASEC) of Manitoba. (This has consisted mainly of an annual conference, but other opportunities throughout the year are being considered).
- Courses offered through the Certificate of Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) program, University of Manitoba Continuing Education.
- Certificate program in Adult Education, Red River College.
- A few courses offered by Manitoba universities at the baccalaureate and masters levels that specialize in adult education theory and practice.
- Other recognized certificate programs in Adult Education (St. Francis Xavier University regularly offers one in a number of cities across Canada.)

Bibliography

Best Program Practices. Saskatchewan Literacy Network, March 2000.

Brundage, D.H. and D. MacKeracher. "Summary of learning principles with implications for facilitating learning and planning programs." *Adult Learning Principles and their Application to Program Planning.* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1980, pp. 97-116.

Evaluating Educational Practice: A Resource Manual for Teachers and Administrators. Manitoba Education and Training, 1996.

Exemplary Practice in Manitoba: Models of Quality in Literacy Programming. Adult Literacy and Continuing Education, Manitoba Education and Training, 1995.

Flint, T.A. & Associates. *Best Practices in Adult Learning: A CAEL/APQC Benchmarking Study.* New York: Forbes, 1999.

Guidelines for Program Development. Adult Literacy and Continuing Education, Manitoba Education and Training, 1998.

Introduction to Workplace Literacy for Practitioners. Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board, 1999.

Manitoba Adult Literacy Programming: Good Practice Guide, 1999-2000. Adult Literacy and Continuing Education, Manitoba Education and Training, 1999.

MacLeod, C. *Principles of Good Practice in Workplace/Workforce Education: A Report on the Think Tank.* ABC Canada and the National Literacy Secretariat, HRDC, 1995.

Mulcone, P., (Ed.) *Current Perspectives on Adminstration of Adult Education Programs.* New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 60. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners, http://www.cael.org/ALFI/Alfi_frames.htm, November 21, 2000

Quality Standards for Adult Literacy: A Practitioners Guide to the Accountability Framework for the Adult Literacy Education System and Core Quality Standards for Programs. Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Division, Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, 1995.

Rasmussen, J., Project Manager. *The BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy.* Literacy, BC, 1999.

Regehr, J., Project Consultant. *Millennium Project Final Document.* Stevenson-Britannia Adult Literacy Program, Winnipeg, 2000.

School-based Planning: A Continuous Process for Effective Education: A Resource for Developing and Implementing Annual School Plans. Manitoba Education and Training, 1996.

Thompson, B. *A Review of the Good Practice Guide with Recommendations.* Literacy and Continuing Education, Manitoba and Training, 1995.